



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release October 5, 1983

Inez Connor 202/343-5634

### 1983-84 WATERFOWL HUNTING REGULATIONS FINALIZED

Final regulations setting the 1983-1984 waterfowl hunting season dates, areas, and bag limits were published in the September 23, 1983, Federal Register by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The regulations include special restrictions to reduce the harvest of black ducks; special seasons for scaup and goldeneyes; extra scaup and teal during regular duck seasons; experimental canvasback seasons in the Atlantic Flyway; additional sandhill crane seasons in the Central Flyway and in Arizona; coots, gallinules, and snipe in the Pacific Flyway; and additional falconry seasons.

The 1983-1984 final rule includes more specific limits set by State wildlife agencies and are based on broader frameworks published by the Service in the September 9, 1983, Federal Register. Generally, the frameworks are the same as last year and are summarized below:

#### Nationwide

-Stabilizing duck season lengths and limits. The Service will retain essentially the same duck season lengths and bag limits this fall as in the past three years as part of a 5-year cooperative study with the Canadian Wildlife Service. The purpose of the study is to provide an opportunity to more precisely determine how hunting regulations, duck harvests, and duck populations interrelate. By stabilizing major duck hunting regulations, waterfowl managers hope, also, to gain further insight into the role of other environmental variables that affect harvests and the populations of ducks. An environmental assessment that describes the proposal was issued by the Service in August 1980.

(over)

-Black ducks. The Service has established regulations designed to reduce the harvest of black ducks in both the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways. Hunting has been identified as one of several factors that may be contributing to the long-term decline of this species. The restrictions were developed cooperatively by the Service and the States in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways. In the Atlantic Flyway, different strategies are being used in the various States for reducing the take of black ducks. In many areas the black duck hunting season will be shorter than the general duck season, and the bag limit on black ducks will be one per day. Hunters should check State regulations for more details. For all States in the Mississippi Flyway the daily bag limit is 100 points under the point system or one black duck per day under conventional regulations.

The following changes in regulations are described by waterfowl flyways.

#### Atlantic Flyway

-Canvasbacks. An experimental canvasback hunting season will be permitted in portions of areas closed since 1973 in the States of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. The season must occur in the last 11 days (last six days in Maryland and Virginia) of the regular duck season. Canvasbacks will be included in the regular bag limit. Up to four canvasbacks may be included in the regular daily duck bag in these areas during the experimental season, not more than one of which may be a hen. Except during the experimental season, canvasback hunting is prohibited in the closed areas, as in previous years. The experimental season is designed to determine whether a limited harvest, primarily of drake canvasbacks, can be permitted in these areas without adversely affecting the population.

-Brant. The brant season is extended from 30 to 50 days; the bag and possession limits remain at two and four, respectively. An increase in the brant population and a forecast of average to above average production this summer prompted this liberalization.

-Zoning. Maryland may establish an eastern and a western zone during the coming duck season. Modifications also were permitted in boundaries of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania zones.

#### Mississippi Flyway

-Canvasbacks. As part of a revised canvasback management program, some of the area closures in the Flyway will be eliminated. Areas heavily used by canvasbacks in the northern part of the Flyway will remain closed. A restricted bag limit of one canvasback daily will apply to the areas reopened.

(more)

-Zoning. Wisconsin and Iowa are given the option to zone for waterfowl hunting. The option of splitting seasons within zones is provided Indiana and Tennessee.

-Canada geese. A number of restrictions are being imposed in response to anticipated lower fall flights of Eastern Prairie and Mississippi Valley (MVP) Canada goose populations. These include reducing harvest quotas to 4,500 (from 5,500 in 1982) in the Lac Qui Parle Zone in Minnesota, and 16,000 (from 20,000 in 1982) in Missouri's Swan Lake Zone. Daily bag limits will be reduced from two birds to one in both States. In Wisconsin, the zone where tags are required is expanded in size, and season lengths are reduced in other portions of the State. Elsewhere in the MVP range, the shorter seasons in effect last year will be retained. Provision is made for a harvest quota in Kentucky's Ballard County Zone.

#### Central Flyway

-Canvasback closures. Areas previously closed to canvasback hunting in North and South Dakota will be eliminated in favor of restrictive bag limits already in effect elsewhere in the Central Flyway.

-Whistling swans. Seasons may be permitted in eastern Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Limited numbers of permittees may be authorized to take one whistling swan during designated periods.

#### Pacific Flyway

-Whistling swan framework in Nevada. The area in Nevada where whistling swans may be hunted is expanded to include Lyon and Pershing Counties along with Churchill County. The number of permits is increased from 500 to 650.

-Northern Zone of California. California may select seasons for the northeastern zone differing from those selected by Oregon.

x x x